



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

News Release

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**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REMINDS
EMPLOYERS TO PROMOTE A SAFE AND SOBER ENVIRONMENT
FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

**State Labor Department Provides Nine Tips for Employers Who
Sponsor Office Parties to Celebrate the Holiday Season**

HONOLULU - During the holiday season, many of Hawai'i's employees and employers usually gather together to celebrate. These parties typically mean lots of music, food and drinks. If the drinks include alcohol, however, office celebrations can have very unfortunate consequences. The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) is therefore providing employers with Nine Tips for Office Celebrations to prevent drunk and impaired driving in Hawai'i's communities and on highways.

Employers can visit the DLIR's website at <http://hawaii.gov/labor/NineTips.shtml> to learn about several measures they can take to minimize negative consequences of alcohol consumption, including tips for planning workplace celebrations.

"It's wonderful that businesses and employers celebrate the joy of the season and show their appreciation to employees by holding holiday office events," said Lt. Governor James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr. "This holiday season, we encourage employers and employees alike to celebrate safely and responsibly. We especially urge everyone not to drink and drive, and to keep friends and co-workers from doing the same. Please visit the DLIR website, which contains more tips to hold fun and safe employer-sponsored events."

Improper use of alcohol may expose employers to liability under tort, workers' compensation or other laws. For example, an employer may be held liable if a person consumes alcoholic beverages at a company-sponsored party and subsequently causes a crash. Some employers have been held liable because negligent acts by employees under the influence of alcohol consumed at employer-sponsored events were found to be within the scope of their employment. In other cases, individuals have been held liable merely because they provided alcohol to social guests.

"The holiday season and office parties should be a happy and positive experience for Hawaii's workforce," noted Darwin L.D. Ching, Director of Labor and Industrial Relations. "Employers should be doing everything possible to ensure that their workers stay safe and healthy while celebrating the holiday season at work or employer-sponsored functions."

Each time an employee is involved in an impaired driving crash, businesses pay in the form of increased absenteeism and use of health-care benefits. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA), the annual employer cost of motor vehicle crashes in which at least one driver was alcohol-impaired is more than \$9 billion, including wage-risk premiums. Furthermore, if the employee caused the crash or is arrested for impaired driving even if a crash did not occur, administrative and legal procedures such as court time and traffic school may require further time away from work.

Additionally, the DLIR website also provides year-round workplace substance abuse education and prevention initiatives at <http://hawaii.gov/labor/substanceabuse/>. The website was developed to help raise awareness about the impact drugs and alcohol have on the workplace and offers resources—including information about how to develop a drug-free workplace policy and ready-to-use training materials.

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